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Reading Matters!

From the desks of Sherry Manley, Ashley Richardella, Jen Herncane, and Robyn Eckels—Early Literacy Coaches

Fifty Nifty Activities: Comprehension

At least one copy of this book has been purchased for each building. See your Title I aide, EAP tutor, or coach for a glance.

Direct and explicit instruction in comprehension with opportunities to practice the "I do, We do, You do" method can improve students' ability to understand both narrative and expository text.

Research on the key factors that impact comprehension include the characteristics of the reader, the nature of the text, and the characteristics of the reading task in which students are engaged.

Some examples of these factors follow.

Characteristics of the Reader:

- Phonological decoding skills and word recognition skills
- Oral language abilities, including vocabulary
- Short-term and working memory abilities
- Background knowledge
- Ability to link new learning with previous learning
- Ability to attend to the text, stay engaged, and respond to the text

Nature of the Text:

- Narrative versus expository
- Unknown vocabulary
- Sentence complexity
- Organization of text (graphics, subtitles, etc.)
- Clarity and cohesion of the writing

Characteristics of the Reading Task:

- The purpose of the reading task
- The degree of structure of the assignment
- The time limit provided
- Scaffolding and accommodations based on skill level

Because various complex factors influence reading comprehension, it is important that teachers get to the root cause of why students have difficulty understanding text.

For students who have problems decoding and reading words, the phonemic awareness and word study sections of this book can help boost their comprehension. If students' word knowledge is limited, then the vocabulary activities in this book will be beneficial.

The activities in the comprehension section of this book deal primarily with text comprehension and the link between oral language comprehension and text comprehension.

The activities will help students use words that they know and words they are learning, make mental pictures that are connected to what they are reading, and learn to connect new information to their past experiences and background knowledge.



Comprehension Activities to try in your classroom...

Growing Sentences

Oral Language skills help build the foundation for reading comprehension. This activity helps students use words to describe other words and ideas while giving practice in listening to, creating, and writing complete sentences. Students are given sentence starters called stems from which bigger sentences can grow.

"What a child takes home in head and heart far outweighs what a child takes home in hand."

"We can teach from our experience, but we cannot teach experience."
~Sasha Azevedo

Whole Groups Instruction

- *Write a sentence stem on the board
- *Depending on the level of your students you may use a simple or more complex starter.
- *Complete an example for the students orally modeling the entire sentence in a fluent manner.
- *Students will turn to a neighbor and state how they would finish the stem.
- *Students will then move to another friend and share the response of the first person and also their own sentence.

Small Group Instruction

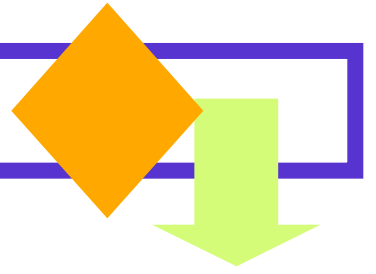
- *Provide a sentence stem.
- *Pass the koosh ball. The person catching the ball must add a word or phrase to the stem.
- *The student must always begin the sentence from the beginning. When the sentence is complete, the ball is tossed to the first person who will then say the entire sentence.
- *The sentence is then written on a piece of chart paper.

Sentence Mix Ups

- *Choose a sentence from the students' reading book and write each word on a separate piece of paper.
- *Pass out the word cards and have the students hold up the cards in front of the room.
- * Challenge the class to put the sentence in the correct order.
- *Have the entire class read the sentence.
- *Ask questions about the sentence: What is the sentence about? What is the subject? What is the verb?
- * For small group practice, have the students copy a sentence from a reading story. All students will read the sentence.
- * Pick a word to change in the sentence and reread the new sentence.
- *Add an adjective or adverb to the sentence and reread the sentence.



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Story Headline

The purpose of a newsletter is to provide specialized information to a targeted audience. Newsletters can be a great way to market your product or service, and also create credibility and build your organization's identity among peers, members, employees, or vendors.

First, determine the audience of the newsletter. This could be anyone who might benefit from the information it contains, for example, employees or people interested in purchasing a product or requesting your service.

You can compile a mailing list from business reply cards, customer information sheets, Business cards collected at trade shows, or membership lists. You might consider purchasing a mailing list from a

company.

If you explore the Project Gallery, you will find many publications that match the style of your newsletter.

Next, establish how much time and money you can spend on your newsletter. These factors will help determine how frequently you publish your newsletter at least quarterly so that it's considered a consistent source of information. Your customers or employees will look forward to its arrival.

Your headline is an important part of the newsletter and should be considered carefully.

Story Headline

You can also research articles or find "filler" articles by accessing the World Wide Web. You can write about a variety of topics but try to keep your articles short.

Much of the content you put in your newsletter can also be used for your Web site. Microsoft Word offers a simple way to convert your newsletter to a Web publication. So, when you're finished writing your newsletter, convert it to a Web site and post it.

The subject matter that appears in

newsletters is virtually endless. You can include stories that focus on current technologies or innovations in your field.

You may also want to note business or economic trends, or make predictions for your customers or clients.

If the newsletter is distributed internally, you might comment upon new procedures or improvements to the business. Sales figures or earnings will show how your business is growing.

"To catch the reader's attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here."



Your business
tagline can go
here

We're on the Web!

See us at:

Back Page Story Headline

In a few words, it should accurately represent the contents of the story and draw readers into the story. Develop the headline before you write the story. This way, the headline will help you keep the story focused.

Examples of possible headlines include Product Wins Industry Award, New Product Can Save You Time, Membership Drive Exceeds Goals, and New Office Opens Near You.

One benefit of using your newsletter as a promotional tool is that you can reuse content from other marketing materials, such as press releases, market studies.

While your main goal of distributing a newsletter might be to sell your product or service, the key to a successful newsletter is making it useful to your readers.

About Our Organization...

Think about your article and ask yourself if the picture supports or enhances the message you're trying to convey. Avoid selecting images that appear to be out of context.

Microsoft includes thousands of clip art images from which you can choose and import into your

newsletter. There are also several tools you can use to draw shapes and symbols.

Once you have chosen an image, place it close to the article. Be sure to place the caption of the image near the image.